ALMA RECORD.

C. M. Fleming Editor and Prop.

ALMA, : : : MICH

NOTES OF THE DAY.

GEN. VON MANTEUFEL.

Edwin Hans Carl Baron Von Manteufel, the son of the President of the Supreme Court of Magdebourg, and one of the most illustrious of the great Germans generals, died at Carlsbad June 17th 1885. Gen. Von Manteufel began his military career at the age of 17 years, and has been prominently identified with nearly all of the important engagements in the military history of the empire.

Brigham Young Jr., and Bishop Snow have gone from Utah to Mexico to buy a large tract of land for the Mormons. This does not indicate a general Mormon emigration to Mexico. The Mormons would not generally abandon their property and homes in Utah and go, even if ordered to do so by their church. But the new lands, if secured, might be used for a refuge from justice by some of those who are compelled by our authorities to take to the woods to escape arrest and conviction, and for the founding of new colonies. The Mexican government, however, it is stated has given the Mormon agents due notice that polygamy will not be tolerated in Mexico, but will be rigorously prosecuted if practiced there: and that any lands they may purchase for colonization will be subject to this limitation. The Mexican state governors have been ordered to see that this regulation is strictly observed.

My daughter, when you note that the man who wants to marry you is just too awfully anxious to learn whether you can bake a loaf of bread or wash a shirt with Chinese dexterity, before you close the negotiations do you just fly around and ascertain whether that man is either willing or able to earn enough flour to make a biscuit and if he has paid for the shirt he wants you to wash. Nine times out of ten, daughter, the man who only wants to marry a housekeeper can be kept more economically in the workhouse than he can in your father's house.—R. J. Burdette.

All letters are now two cents an ounce or fraction thereof, instead of the same rate per half ounce or fraction. On newspapers entered as second-class matter, the rate is one cent for each pound or fraction thereof, one-half the present rates. Drop letters are also two cents per ounce at letter carrier offices, and one cent per ounce where free delivery by carrier is not established. The same rates will apply to matter addressed to Canada, but not to other foreign countries.

A writer in the New England Medical Monthly says that unreasonable apprehension of possible calamity depresses the vitality and thus indirectly increases the power of disease. He cites the case of a man so panic stricken about cholera that he rushed immediately out of his town, leaving his family to follow. He died in a few days, not of cholera, but of fright.

We now have in this country that benignant new system of postage which makes an ounce, and not half an ounce, the standard for letters. Every lover and every sweetheart will now be able to double the endearing length of their affectionate communications. How much this will add to the sum of human happiness it is not necessary to estimate.

Justice has been meted out to one villain at least, in the sentence of James D. Fish, ex-president of the Marine bank. Fish was concerned with Ward in the swindles that ruined Gen. Grant and his family. A cell in the penitentiary now yearns for Ward, and when he is safely incarcerated under a long sentence the public will heartily applaud.

Gladstone has written a letter intimating his desire to be returned to parliament, all of which indicates that the "Grand Old Man" clings to power as tenaciously as he clings to life. This announcement of Gladstone's has inspired liberals to renewed effort, and will have a very strong effect upon the coming elections.

Many veterans throughout the state believe that the soldier bounty bill became a law at the last session: This is a mistake. The measure passed the House but died in the Senate. The soldiers' home bill which became a law detracted from the strength of the bounty bill.

The latest estimate places the wheat crop at 350,000,000 bushels. By a judicious mixing of corn bread we will probably be able to keep the wolf from the door.

THE COUNTRY FIDDLER.

What music the master makes,
With pedals and keys;
The roar of the blast that shakes
The cliffs on their granite knees;
The sighing cough of the wind,
As it signals the storm to come,
With the trampling rain behind,
When the plains are parched and dumb.

The chanting of tempest hymns,
The roll of the thunder drum,
The lashing of lusty limbs,
Where the forests creak and hum
The distant dolorous dying,
As the windy forces part,
That is like the secret crying,
And craving of the heart.

But make it as loud as thunder,
As low as inward pain,
As rapturous as the wonder
Of love returned again;
Not till I gain that city
For which my father prayed,
Shall I ever hear such music
As our country fiddler made.

Merry, or mad, or mournful,
It sounded to me divine,
(No need to look jealous and scornful,
He was forty; I was nine),
I sat by his mother's side;
I could not tell, were I bid,
What grace and what sweetness died
When the fiddler's mother did.

The saintliest, she of saints,
The kindliest of the kind,
More than the poet paints
Of goodness to the mind,
Dear is her name to the sinner,
Dear to the saint the sound,
The name of Charlotte Skinner,
In all the country round.

In a mask of moonlight tranced,
Dew-dappled, the orchard dreamed;
In the meadows the crickets danced
And the silken gossamers gleamed;
And, doubtless, were elfins peered,
From their moonless, sylvan vaults,
And whisked and wheeled to the weird,
Sad strains of the "Fairy Waltz."

Strange thoughts in my childish head,
Chased lightly to "Money Musk,"
To the "Fisher's Horn-pipe" sped,
Through the dim enchanted dusk,
How good did the old world seem,
How much a better place,
Than what we can ever deem
When we meet it face to face.

No jest, for it is a tear,
For memories sweet and faint;
Borne from the past, I hear
Those melodies, like a plaint,
They bring the scent of the wildwood,
The purpling bloom of the lea,
Till the happy heart of childhood
Is born afresh in me.

To-night no philosophies,
No creeds precisely filed,
Wiser than all the wise
Is the heart of the little child.
If I were to plead and pray
For what I most do yearn,
I should only have to say,
"Oh, my child-heart return!"

Not till I gain that city
For which my fathers prayed,
Shall I ever hear such music
As our country fiddler made.
And thou, midst the mystic seven
Gold candles, bid him in,
For I want to hear in heaven,
The sound of his violin.

FARM, GARDEN AND HOUSEHOLD.

The Best Acre on the Farm.

The best acre on the farm is the garden, and the one that yields the greatest profits when properly managed, and, withal, the acre we rarely meet. Almost every farmer has an orchard, or rather has a regulation number of fruit trees planted, but without regard to selection as to variety or to their adaptation to the soil or climate in which they are to grow. As a general thing, our farmers seem to look upon choice fruit with contempt; they cannot understand the value in the family of early, medium and late fruits of their respective sorts, or that they are of the slightest importance in domestic economy.

Almost every farmer has what he calls a garden, in which may be found a very small and equally poor selection of poorly grown vegetables, and as a rule, an abundance of weeds. But what a rarity a good garden is in connection with the farm, the proper and legitimate place for one! The farmer is the man of all men who should have not only a garden, but the best one possible. He, of all men, cannot afford to be without a garden, yet he is the only man who tills the soil and says he cannot afford to have one. His plea is that it interferes with his farming operations, which are of greater importance, when, as a matter of fact, it should be the most important part of his work, because it is not only the most essential to his happiness, but because it pays the best dividends on the capital invested, in healthful, nutritious and delicious food.

Farmer's Houses.

While it is creditable to every farmer that he looks well after his farm, says the Farmer and Manufacturer, it is certainly of the highest importance that he have a special concern as to his farmhouse. There is no more dreary place, assuming the title of a home, than a rough, dilapidated tenement located on a farm. It is all the more dreary if it has nothing within it inviting to the mind, no grateful cheer of books, no pleasant furniture and neat adornments, and lacking surroundings of good fences, fine shrubbery and flowers, a pleasant lawn and appropriate shade trees. Lost, indeed, to anything approaching refinement, must be that mortal who can dwell in a rickety, unpainted building, with bars for a front gate, chickens wallowing before the the door, pigpens elbowing the house in the rear, scraggy trees never cared for, or no trees at all, no cheering shrubs, no neatness or trimness. A plea of poverty is no excuse; for universal shiftlessness or indolence is the cause of such a picture.

Farming is hard work at the best; and where it amounts to abject drudgery, with no sunshine in-doors, it is no wonder the farmers' sons and daughters become restive and long for the time to come when they can throw off the shackles of an unsatisfying servitude, and seek other fields of employment where they can enjoy some of the privileges they can not enjoy at home. Do not enrich the soil of the field by impoverishing that of the household.

It is no gaudiness or lavish ornaments that are needed. Many a home can be plain, but still lovely. Nature can aid greatly, if industry is applied to use her agencies. It is not a waste to have her bestowments. "A thing of beauty is joy forever." There need be no loss to be tasteful. Nature and beauty are synonymous. Good taste and good economy can therefore be made handmaids to each other.

THE OLD CHURCH BELL.

Ring on, ring on, sweet Sabbath bell!
Thy mellow tones I like to hear;
I was a boy when first they fell
In melody upon my ear;
In those dear days past and gone,
When sporting here in boyish glee,
The magic of thy Sabbath tone
Awoke emotions deep in me.

Long years have gone, and I have strayed
Out o'er the world far, far away.
But thy dear tones have round me played
On every lovely Sabbath day,
When strolling o'er the mighty plains,
Spread widely in the unpeopled West,
Each Sabbath morn I've heard thy strains
Tolling the welcome day of rest.

Upon the rocky mountain crest,
Where Christian feet have never trod,
In the deep bosom of the West,
I've thought of thee and worshiped God.
Ring on, sweet bell, I've come again
To hear thy cherished call to prayer,
There's less of pleasure now than pain
In those dear tones which fill my ear.

THE WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER.

In the bright summer sunlight
We see near the strand
The cliffs made immortal
By great Shakespeare's hand
You may search the fair shores
Of old England over,
You will never find cliffs
Like the white cliffs of Dover.

The gray castle may stand
On the rock-bound coast,
And the pretty town near it
In vain pride may boast:
There is no sight so pleasant
To the tired sea rover
As a view o'er the waters
Of the white cliffs of Dover.

Oh, land of our Fathers,
Our heart-love for thee
Is as warm as the sunshine,
As deep as the sea.
Thy bright fields are fresh
With the sweet-scented clover,
As we bid thee farewell
By the white cliffs of Dover.

The steamer moves out
From the long wooden pier,
And the parting is sad,
With the sigh and the tear;
But we still watch the land,
Growing lower and lower,
Till we leave in the distance
The white cliffs of Dover.

THE WOMAN IN RED.

A Thrilling Italian Story of the Last Century.

BY GEORGE W. M. REYNOLDS.

CHAPTER XII.

ANOTHER PLOT TO CARRY OFF FRANCESCA.

There was deep consternation and grief in the Palace Donati; and although the dreaded Jewess had departed, the Countess and Francesca could not shake off the vague terror which her presence had caused. She had said she would return, and they knew intuitively that she would keep her word. The Countess Donati had just cause for alarm and dismay. She carried in her breast the knowledge—the terrible secret—that Francesca, her dearly beloved Francesca, was not her daughter. And now the words of this woman—her manner and her intimate acquaintance with circumstances none but the real mother could have known—carried conviction to the soul of Constanza Donati that the Woman in Red was indeed the mother of the girl whom she had always looked upon as her own. But though she bore about with her this inward consciousness she did not suffer it to find vent in words, even to herself, and to Francesca vehemently and angrily denied it."

"Mother, dear mother," the young girl cried, "do tell me that I am indeed your daughter, and not that of the poor Jewess."

"You are—you are my child. The woman is mad, and I will take steps to have her punished as an impostor. She shall be sent to prison and scourged."

"No—no, dear mother; do not have her ill-used," cried the gentle girl. "She has suffered much, and is in deep grief. Poor woman, although she is mistaken with respect to me, I feel sure that she has really lost her child; and, doubtless, it is that loss which has driven her frantic."

While mother and daughter thus converse, the one trying to reassure the other, a servant entered the room.

"A messenger, my lady, has just arrived, bearing a dispatch from Venice."

The Countess took the missive, and, hastily breaking the seal, proceeded to read it. It was from her husband, the Count; and, as Constanza Donati read it, her heart sank within her. With a cry of anguish she threw herself on a couch, and gave way to a burst of uncontrollable grief.

The Count wrote to say that one misfortune had fallen on another; that he was utterly ruined in a pecuniary sense; and his only hope of deliverance from his difficulties was the obtaining immediately of a hundred and fifty thousand ducats.

The unfortunate Countess had tried in every conceivable way to obtain the money, and had failed in all her efforts. And now ruin stared her in the face. Francesca, her more than daughter, for whom she would risk so much, would be penniless instead of a wealthy heiress.

The Countess determined on making one great effort to avert the ruin which threatened her husband. She gathered together all her jewels and valuables, as also all Francesca's; and, placing these in a box, she sallied out with the determination of selling or pledging them for their full value. She knew, alas, that the whole together could not amount in value to more than half the money; but yet she hoped that the full sum might be borrowed, she giving her own security in addition.

It is night, and Francesca is again alone. Her chamber opens into a corridor leading from the great saloon of the Palace Donati. The poor girl is overwhelmed with sorrow, for, besides the trouble in which her mother is involved, the memory of her interview with the Woman in Red weighs heavily on her mind. She remembered her parting words—that she would return to claim her daughter.

The windows of the large saloon look out on a garden tastefully laid out in the italian style.

Two figures may be observed stealing cautiously along in the shadow, and silently approaching the mansion. They have just alighted from a carriage on the other side of the wall which divides the pleasure grounds of the Palace Donati from a narrow street running at the back. Both men are cloaked, and both men carry swords, and wear large, overhanging hats. A close observer might notice, even in the darkness, that one has a distinguished air and somewhat haughty carriage.

We will not keep the reader in suspense, but may say at once that one is Count Claudio and Hector Fiaramonte. They have evidently arranged their plan of action; for both, without hesitation, commence climbing the trellis-work leading to the open window of the large saloon. Suddenly an exclamat on broke from Count Claudio, who was in advance.

"A thousand devils! what means this?"

"What ails you, Count?" asked Fiaramont: "is not the way clear enough?"

"Lower your voice; we may be heard. The way clear! too clear; for see, here is a rope ladder."

So saying, Count Claudio laid hold of a ladder rope and swung it to Fiaramonte. The latter caught it in his hand, and after gazing at it for a moment, gave vent to a cry of astonishment.

"Hasten, Count: something is wrong: I know this rope-ladder—have seen it before."

"The devil!"

"It is the devil: for it belongs to one not apt to stick at trifles; and if, as I suspect, he is now in the house, it may fare ill with the young lady."

An exclamation of fury broke from the Count.

"To whom then, does it belong?"

"To Bravadura: as great a ruffian as ever cut a gentleman's throat for the sake of his purse."

"Bravadura—the bravo, the hired assassin? What does he here?"

"I know not, no good I'll be sworn. We shall know anon. Mount Count. Count Claudio swung himself lightly up, and the next moment leaped to his feet in the saloon. Fiaramonte followed his example, and both employed themselves in reconnoitering the situation.

The saloon appeared deserted. An oil-lamp in a colored shade cast a dim light, just sufficient to distinguish objects by. The saloon appeared untenanted, and Count Claudio, to make assurance doubly sure, took up the lamp and looked carefully all around.

"So far so good, Fiaramonte," he said; "now to the business. It must be done—quietly, I hope, but it must be done."

"Very good, Count. I hope she won't scream."

"I think not; I will explain to her. She will see the necessity of the step, and grant me her forgiveness for the gentle force circumstances compel me to use."

Still, though he endeavored to persuade himself that Francesca would not be seriously offended, he felt by no means at his ease. The desperate nature of his circumstances, conjoined with his deep love for Francesca, seriously embarrassed him. On the one hand was Rudiga, the Woman in Red, who claimed her; on the other was the Countess who also asserted her right to the girl.

"But supposing she resists, and raises an outcry?"

"At all risks she must be carried off. My deep love must afterwards be my excuse; her own heart, too, will plead for me."

While Claudio, bent on carrying off by force the object of his mad passion, was talking with his accomplice, Francesca in utter ignorance of the danger that menaced her, was calmly asleep in an adjoining room. She had not undressed, preferring to await her mother's return before doing so.

From the fact of the rope-ladder hanging from the window, Claudio and the other knew that some one besides themselves must have gained admission to the house. Taking the lamp in his hand, Claudio proceeded to explore thoroughly first the saloon, and afterward the corriders which led from it. There were two of these, in one of which was the chamber of Francesca. He examined this first, passing noiselessly right to the end. When he had satisfied himself that no one was there, he retraced his steps, and was on the point of re-entering the saloon with the intention of searching the other passage, when Fiaramonte suddenly laid his hand on his arm.

"A light—see, a light; some one is moving."

Now that his attention was called to it, Count Claudio noticed a dim flickering light, coming as though from a shaded lantern in the large hall.

Cautiously he advanced, and concealing himself behind a pillar, looked out sharply, first, however, putting out the light he carried. He could make out the figure of a man stealing noiselessly about. He carried with him a small lantern. He presently set this down on a large table, and commenced tampering with the lock of a large safe, endeavoring to open it.

It was our friend Bravadura, and apparently his design was robbery. Fiaramonte stole silently up to him, and just as he was about opening the cabinet, laid his hand upon his shoulder. Bravadura started as though shot, and, with a savage oath, drew his knife and prepared to defend himself.

So soon, however, as he recognized Fiaramonte, he refrained from attacking him.

"What brings you here?" he growled.

"And what brings you? No good, I'll be bound."

"Good or no good, that's my business; so just attend to yours, and leave me alone."

"What is your object?" again asked Fiaramonte.

"Can't you guess?"

"Gold?"

"Yes; gold in the first place; in the second, something else; but, curse it, the man who promised to aid me has played me false. I shall have to do the job alone unless you feel inclined for a cut in with me. What say you? I'll make it worth your while."

"What is it?" asked Fiaramonte.

"You know the Jewess—the Woman in Red?"

"Yes."

"Count Claudio held his breath and listened intently.

"Well, this Woman in Red has employed me to do a little business for her, and promises liberal pay."

"And the nature of the business?"

"Oh, a mere bagatelle—only to carry off and convey to a place fixed on by her, a young girl——"

"A girl! for what purpose, and where is the girl."

"For what purpose I neither know nor care. As to who the young girl is—she is in this palace, and they call her Francesca Donati. I have ascertained which is her room. Come, what say you? A third share in the reward shall be yours. Yes or no?"

"No."

"Then go to the devil, and leave me alone."

"I shall not go to the devil: and so far as carrying this girl off, I shall not leave you alone."

By this time Bravadura had succeeded in breaking open the cabinet, and quickly possessed himself of the contents without opposition on the part of Fiaramonte.

All this time Count Claudio remained behind the pillar, watching and listening.

Bravadura, having pocketed the contents of the cabinet took up his lantern and advanced toward the corrider, in which was the room of Francesca.

"Fiaramonte placed himself in the way.

"Where are you going, my good friend?"

"What, in the name of all the devils, has that to do with you? Stand on one side or it will be the worse for you."

But Fiaramonte showed no disposition to move.

"Hell and furies! Will you be off, and mind your own business?"

"No, I will not. You shall not pass here."

Foaming with rage, Bravadura drew his knife, and without another word, rushed on his old companion in sin.

There was a struggle, brief but severe. Fortunately for Fiarmonte, he contrived, by skill and good luck, to wrest from the other his knife. Still, however the burly ruffian was an overmatch for his adversary by reason of his great strength, and at the end of a few minutes Fiaramonte was hurled bruised and bleeding to the ground.

Bravadura repossessed himself of his knife, and again advanced toward the corrider. But at this moment Count Claudio stepped from behind the pillar, and pointing his sword to his breast, bade him begone.

"Back, ruffian! you pass not here."

Bravadura, blind with passion, then threw himself forward, making desperate blows with his long knife.

But in Claudio he had a skillful and wary antagonist, though his light sword seemed to be inferior to the huge knife of the bravo. He handled it so skillfully, drawing blood from several places in a very short time, that Bravadura was compelled to retreat to avoid being run through the body.

The windows on one side looked out on to a creek which ran into the harbor. The waters of the bay washed the base of the wall. Driven up to this by the swift sword of Claudio, the bandit in retreating tripped, and fell headlong through the window into the sea below.

There was a cry of horror and agony, a splash, and then all was silent.

The murderer of Margaret d'Arbel had gone to his last account.

"The Woman in Red prophesied that ere a month he would be dead," said Fiaramonte, solemnly. "Her words have come true."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE COUNTESS REFUSES THE ORDEAL.

The affray, though so quickly ended, of necessity alarmed the household. The stamping of feet and the combatants struggling together; the fierce oaths of Bravadura, and the clash of steel as Claudio's sword came in contact with the bravo's huge knife—all combined to make a great uproar.

The sound of approaching footsteps and the ringing of a bell warned Claudio to fly. He was about clambering from the same window by which he had entered when Francesca ran into the room, followed by several domestics carrying lights.

Claudio knew that he was recognized, so he gave up the idea of escape and stood before her, not knowing what to say or do.

"Claudio!" she said, "you here—and at this time! What means it—and this uproar?"

He hesitated what to say; but presently, regaining his self-possession, he replied, calmly:

"Nothing, my dear Francesca—nothing: I have only been expelling an intruder."

"Expelling an intruder? How? what mean you? who was the intruder?"

"A ruffian who proposed to carry you off by force, dearest, and who has paid for his audacity with his life."

"To carry me off by force! This is very incomprehensible," she exclaimed. "And you what do you here yourself? You say you have been expelling an intruder—what means your presence? How came you here? not by the gate, for that is closed."

Claudio colored up with confusion and shame, and knew not what to reply.

"Francesca's eye, glancing around the room, fell upon the rope ladder fastened to the sill.

"Ha!" she exclaimed; "a light begins to dawn upon me. You entered like a thief in the night—*you, Claudio*; with what object is best known to yourself. It is you who dared to intrude——"

"Francesca," said Claudio, humbly, "send all away and I will explain."

With a motion of the hand the young girl dismissed the attendants who were crowding the room; and as soon as they were alone, Claudio fell on one knee before her.

"Lady—Francesca, dear Francesca, my great love must be the excuse for my presumption. I will own the truth, and sue for pardon at your feet. Driven frantic by my despair at the thought of losing you, my heart's idol, I dared to think that, should I end all difficulties by carrying you off and placing you safe from those who would part us, your generous heart would plead in my favor, and that you would consent to give me your hand, and forgive the strategem by which I became possessed of you. Francesca, I have spoken the truth. Pity and forgive me."

A burning flush of wounded modesty and just indignation suffused the maiden's neck, face and bosom."

"Count Claudio, rise. I thought you worthier, and little dreamed that you would ever dare presume so far. You have grossly insulted me. I forgive you. Now rise; henceforth we are strangers."

Her voice faltered as she spoke this sentence; but nevertheless there was an air of decision about her which caused the baffled Count's heart to sink within him.

"Have you no pity, Francesca, for my great love?"

"I have no pity for such love as yours, for that must be but a hollow mockery of love which would use force and wrest by violence what should be only freely granted. Rise, Count Claudio, I have spoken."

"Ay, rise, Count Claudio; my daughter speaks well."

He started to his feet, for there before him stood the Countess Donati, who had but just returned.

Almost at the same instant there fell on his ears the sonorous tones of another voice.

"Ay, rise, Count Claudio; my daughter has spoken well."

A slight scream broke from Francesca: while the Countess Donati gave vent to a cry as though a poniard had pierced her heart.

"The Jewess—the Woman in Red!" cried Claudio. "Woman, what want you? What do you here?"

"What do I here? Ha, ha! you do well to ask me, Count Claudio; you, who would have torn a young maiden away by force, and compelled her to your arms; you, who in the dead of night, with your hireling assassins, steal in through open windows like a thief, and with worse than a thief's object in view—it is well, very well, for you to ask me, Count Claudio, what I do here."

There was an intensity of scorn in the accents and manner of the Jewess which could not but have its effect. But he determined to put a bold face on the matter.

"It is false, accursed woman—false; and you know it."

An exclamation of fury broke from her.

"Silence, rash boy; 'tis not false. But now I heard you own it, as did you woman" (pointing to the Countess Donati.) "Besides, for my own ends, I myself kept watch over the Palace Donati, and saw you scale the wall and mount to the window."

"Ha! and what, then, was your object, sorceress, in sending your own emissary? Supposing your words are true, did not you charge your ruffian accomplice, who has paid the penalty of his life for the attempt, to carry off the girl?"

"And what if I did? Who has a better right than I, her mother—I, Rudiga the Jewess, called the Woman in Red?"

"It is false, accursed hag!" shrieked the countess, as she heard her—"false as your own heretical soul!"

"It is not false," said the Jewess, sternly; "it is true: I have the proofs."

A dead silence fell upon her hearers as she produced a packet of papers from her bosom, and commenced to unfold and arrange them. All watched and waited for her next words with breathless interest, for a presentiment told them that the denouement approached.

"Francesca," said the Jewess to the maiden, "approach."

She obeyed unresistingly, as though impelled by a hidden power.

The Jewess took one of the papers from the roll and unfolded it. It was a torn and soiled document, and bore on the face of it evidence of considerable antiquity.

Addressing the girl, the Jewess spoke as follows in tones of great solemnity:

"Francesca, daughter, heed well what I am about to say. That you are, indeed, my daughter I know full well, and will shortly convince you. The voice of nature is strong in my heart: nor is it silent in yours. I read it in your eyes, your looks, your agitation. You know, oh, daughter, that I speak the truth—that my claim to you is sanctioned by the immutable laws of the Most High; and though for a time the evil-doer may triumph, God will assuredly redress the wrongs of the injured, and punish the guilty, when it shall seem fit to His all-seeing wisdom. Speak, Francesca! I am about to convince thee that I am no vain boaster, but that I can prove my words. Wilt thou fly in the face of nature? and when I have convinced thee that I speak truly, and am indeed thy mother, will thou refuse thy obedience—deny that I am thy mother? Surely it cannot be."

Francesca gazed in the utmost distress first on one, then on the other of the claimants. On the one hand was habit, and the love she bore the Countess, who had ever been to her the kindest and most indulgent of parents; on the other hand the words and manner of the Jewess were such as to compel her to believe them true, and, above all, a still small voice whispered within her that in the Woman in Red she saw her mother. She could scarce define the feeling, but each moment it gained in strength. It seemed as if, though from the far-distant past, dim memories of the voice and features of the Jewess arose and bore witness to the truth of her story.

Between the two feelings, love and duty, the poor girl's mind was in sad trouble and perplexity.

The Woman in Red watched her perplexity with ill-concealed satisfaction. She saw that she had created a great impression on the girl's mind.

Both the Countess Donati and Claudio were silent. They waited to hear what she had to say, and judge, then, whether she could maintain her pretensions or not. But each inwardly felt a conviction that she was right, and would establish her case.

As for Hector Fiaramonte, he was so stricken with superstitious awe at the death of Bravadura; and the fulfillment thereby of Rudiga's prophecy, that he stood in very wholesome awe of her, and, fearing lest she might adventure a like prediction with regard to himself, kept at as great a distance and as much out of sight as possible.

Presently the Woman in Red again spoke—not hurridly or diffidently, but slowly, deliberately, as though well knowing what she said, and the effect it would have. She held out a paper she had in her hand.

"Here is a document, signed by the worthy cure of the village of Castellan, regarding the infant daughter of one Miriam, a Jewess, and her husband, Reuben. A foul murder was committed, and the child stolen from one Margaret d'Arbel, who had her in custody during the temporary absence of her parents. A proclamation was made by the authorities, offering a large reward for the discovery of the murderer; and as the identification of the stolen child would tend to bring the murderer to justice, the most accurate description was given of her. Here is the original of the description displayed in the market-place at Castellan. It is duly attested by the cure and prefect. The description speaks of a female child, about a year old; complexion fair, eyes blue, and skin very soft and delicate. On the front of the left shoulder there is a peculiar mark spoken of; it consists of seven small moles, arranged almost in a circle. The shape and number are so peculiar that there can be no mistake, Francesca, come hither."

The girl obeyed tremblingly.

"It is false—all a vile forgery," cried the Countess Donati, fiercely. "The woman knows of the marks and has trumped up this story and forged the paper."

"It is not false, oh, woman, and you know it. See, see," she cried, raising her voice to a higher key, and at the same time baring the girl's shoulder, "see the mark, the evidence of the truth of my words. Francesca, daughter, come to my arms!"

Then she folded her in a close embrace, the girl not attempting to resist.

Great was the jealous rage of the Countess as she saw Francesca folded in the arms of the hated Jewess.

"Francesca," she shrieked, wildly, "leave that woman instantly! She is an impostor. I, your mother, command you."

Still clasping Francesca tightly, Rudiga raised her head, and regarded her rival sternly.

"You her mother!" she said, in accents of scorn and bitter hate: "you! False as your own cruel heart! Come, I will put you to the test."

There was a wild gleam in the eye of the Jewess, which threatened ill; and spite of her courage and determination, the spirit of the Countess quailed.

The Jewess stood with outstretched arm, like an accusing angel, and demanded of the Countess:

"Is this girl your daughter?"

"Yes, my daughter."

"Liar! Darest also be a perjurer? I will try thee."

"Swear; and peril thy soul if thou speakest false!"

The Countess Donati trembled at the terrible ordeal, the false oath she was challenged to make; but, nerving herself by a desperate effort—for she knew Francesca was intently regarding her, and that her answer would seal her fate one way or the other—she spoke:

"Yes, yes; she is my daughter. Why should I not swear to it?"

She was deadly pale as she spoke, and her whole frame shook visibly.

"We will try thee. If thou canst take this oath, oh Christian, thou art fallen low indeed!"

Then with a solemn step and action, Rudiga approached a niche in the wall of the saloon, and took down a small crucifix.

The Countess Donati shuddered with horror. She divined her intention.

"Woman thou sayest this girl is thy child. I challenge thee to swear it on this emblem of thy faith."

The Countess Donati turned deadly pale.

The Jewess approached, and tendered her the crucifix; but the guilty woman shrunk back in horror.

"Swear!"

"Yes, swear, mother, dear mother—swear that I am, indeed, your daughter. I will believe you, and love you ever as of old."

The Countess took the cross in her trembling hand; but suddenly her horror at the idea of the dreadful perjury she was called on to commit overwhelmed her.

She let fall the cross as though it had blistered her hand, and with a wild, despairing shriek cried:

"I cannot, I cannot: for *she is not my daughter*."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Pneumonia and the Rinks.

N. Y. Sun.

Dr. John T. Nagle, registrar of vital statistics in the health department, was asked whether roller skating was responsible for the recent great increase in the number of deaths from pneumonia in this city. He said: "There has never been so large a proportion of deaths from pneumonia as we have had recently. I speak now particularly of pneumonia as a primary cause of death. The statistics are carefully prepared, so as to separate the deaths from pneumonia as a primary cause from the deaths where pneumonia is the result of some other disease. It is a startling fact that the deaths from pneumonia last week were 20 per cent of the total mortality and reached the alarming number of 149. The week before, of the 776 deaths in the city, there were 142 from pneumonia. In the usual course of events I expected a decrease last week and was astonished to find an increase. In the week before the last I have named there were 132 deaths from pneumonia. In February this disease carried off 575 victims, and in January 486. There was no month last year in which there was any near approach to these figures. There have been several weeks this year in which the deaths from pneumonia have been greater than in some of the months of last year.

"In looking for the cause of this increase of pneumonia it is but natural to think of roller skating. Of course I have no means of tracing these 149 deaths of last week to roller skating. We had deaths by pneumonia before there was any roller skating. But I can say with certainty that such exposure as the roller skating mania produces is likely to produce pneumonia. Here are, say, 20,000 young people going every night to skating rinks or balls. They indulge in violent exercise in heated rooms and then go out into the chilly air possibly thinly clad, and the result is fatal inflammation of the lungs."

"It must be remembered that roller skating is a very vigorous exercise, and induces profuse perspiration and fatigue. Under such conditions people are most likely to take cold. Many of the participants doubtless perform this vigorous labor in addition to a hard day's work, and they render themselves more liable to disease."

"Pneumonia is emphatically a winter disease. People go from the heated rooms to the cold streets, and unless they are well protected from the weather the sudden change becomes injurious. You may see people, young people especially, at this time of the year 'rushing the season,' as the saying is. They are anxious to display their spring attire before the spring comes. The fashions of light cutaway coats for men and decollette dresses for women have much to do with the spread of the pneumonia."

"Those who have visited the skating rinks have observed how careless the young people are of the weather. They dash about for hours in the heated rooms, and when the time comes to go home they find the cool air rather refreshing than otherwise. They find the cars crowded, perhaps, and walk through the chilly streets while yet perspiring from their violent exercise. All this tends to pneumonia. A little roller skating or dancing might be healthful, but it should be under proper precautionary conditions. The exercise should not be too protracted or violent. The dress should be appropriate, and the changes of dress should conform to the changes of temperature. A young woman who should go into the open air in her ball dress after vigorously dancing would be considered very indiscreet. Yet the change is quite as marked when young girls skate for hours in street costumes and then go out over heated without change."

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

General Middleton, who, at last accounts, was pursuing the Indians in the northwest with a small body of mounted men, is an English officer of considerable experience, having served in New Zealand against the Maoris in 1845 and 1846, and also in the Indian mutiny. In the latter he took an active part in the siege of Lucknow and was recommended for the Victoria Cross.